

# MISSISSIPPI HOMELAND SECURITY STRATEGY



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Message from the Director:

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security has the distinct honor and duty of providing leadership in the protection of the citizens of Mississippi from terrorist attacks, both foreign and domestic. Homeland Security is also responsible for providing timely advice to the Governor and cabinet in order to efficiently and immediately address potential terrorist threats or acts. Additionally, Homeland Security is tasked with providing leadership for preventing, preparing against, mitigating, and recovering from any man-made or natural crisis.

Such tasks carry enormous responsibility and can only be accomplished through diligent planning, extensive training and the participation of, and cooperation with, the citizens of Mississippi. The Office of Homeland Security recognizes that the residents of Mississippi are an integral part in the protection of this state, and thus encourages all citizens to be informed, vigilant, and prepared.

Even before the tragic events of September 11th, Mississippi had already begun the process of increased security and coordination of emergency personnel. These early efforts are indicative of the degree of commitment that the State of Mississippi has made to Homeland Security, law enforcement and first responders.

Finally, it is important to remember that combating terrorism does not always reveal tangible results even though great steps are being taken and successes realized. Ideally, when terrorist activities are deterred or foiled, everyday life will continue without major disruptions. In this regard, please be patient and trust that the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security and professionally trained emergency personnel remain steadfast to ensure an environment free from fear. Together, the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, the emergency response agencies and the people of Mississippi will continue to provide a safe environment and a great place to live.

As you consider this revision of the State Homeland Security Strategy, note that each of Mississippi Goals directly correlate with one of the eight National Priorities. This unification of vision will better foster an environment that will allow Mississippi to achieve and maintain an exceptional level of preparedness.

The State of Mississippi has a long history of tragedy and triumph, a strong resilient people and a wealth of resources that have coalesced to shape this state. Understanding the history of Mississippi, the strength of her citizens and the real hazards faced at the hands of evil and/or careless men, Mississippi endeavors to ever maintain *Vigilance and Preparedness*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. W. Ledbetter', with a stylized flourish at the end.

J. W. Ledbetter

Director

Mississippi Office of Homeland Security

## Mission Statement

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, in order to achieve and maintain an exceptional level of preparedness, constantly seeks to support and enhance the capabilities of those responders tasked with prevention, protection, response and recovery. The mission of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Office of Homeland Security is to partner with the State and Local emergency personnel, private sector resources as well as citizens during both man-made and natural disasters in order to prevent, protect, respond and recover from threats and/or acts of terrorism within Mississippi. This office leads in “all-hazard” prevention, preparedness, response and recovery efforts by continually fostering strong partnerships across professional response disciplines and enhancing the education and training of citizens throughout Mississippi.

## Purpose

Mississippi’s Homeland Security Strategy is designed to align state Homeland Security goals with the National Priorities as established by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The strategy is designed utilizing an all-hazards planning approach and thus addresses needs of each of the conventional response disciplines at local, regional and state levels.

The Mississippi State Homeland Security Strategy (2011 Revision) considers utilization of resources allocated from the United States Department of Homeland Security and in-state partnerships for the fulfillment of this strategy. A forward looking plan, Mississippi attempts to anticipate needs for a period of time extending beyond a single fiscal year.

Mississippi places emphasis on planning in an effort to enhance objectives related to funding, training, exercise and equipment acquisition objectives. The strategy promotes teamwork in planning through enhanced collaborations with local planning councils, regions and the State Homeland Security Council.

## Vision

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security seeks to enhance the capabilities of the State of Mississippi in order to better protect the citizens and to better equip the comprehensive response community for the present-day response environment. The emphasis of this program is to prepare for an all-hazards response including preparation for weapons of mass destruction, terroristic acts and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) events. Emphasizing advanced planning, training and development that challenges the response community with ever advancing levels of equipment, technology and information sharing.

## Focus

Mississippi will achieve the goals and objectives by focusing on the following:

- An all-hazards planning approach;
- An enhanced prevention effort including improved information sharing technology, enhanced training, effective equipment and increased development of private sector partnerships.
- An enhanced protection effort including well guided equipment acquisitions, advanced training and continued support of MSAIC, the Mississippi information sharing system.
- An enhanced emergency response, supported by the planning, training, equipping and exercising that improves local, regional, tribal and state capabilities for all hazards.

## Coordination

In January 2004, the Governor created the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security (MOHS). The MOHS is a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety. The MOHS is designated as the State Administrative Agency (SAA) and its Director is the State Homeland Security Advisor.

Strategy coordination is consistent with the multi-disciplined, multi-jurisdictional, all-hazard concept of planning. It further employs goals of the National Response Framework and identifies state specific goals and objectives which parallel the eight national priorities.

Revision of this strategy involved an alignment of state and national goals and objectives, reviews of previous State Homeland Security Grant Investment Justifications, the 2008 State Preparedness Report and reports of the Regional Response Team working groups. Previous strategy updates were enhanced by the conversation regarding preparedness in the aftermath of Katrina, this revision continues to benefit from lessons learned from Katrina as well as more recent events involving responses, i.e. Gustav and Ike.

## Effort

Utilization of the 2008 State Preparedness Report allowed the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security an initiation point for a vast overhaul of all documents related to the duties of the agency. Previous State Homeland Security Strategy documents were based upon the 2003 Assessment data, with the previous revision based on the 2006 Program Capability Assessment. The planning process continues to recognize both local and state needs, utilizes the multi-disciplined, multi-jurisdictional, all-hazard approach to planning and has been written to closely align with both the 2008 State Preparedness Report and the 2008 State Homeland Security Grant Program Investment Justifications.

## Description of Jurisdictions

Each of the 82 counties in the state has been designated as a jurisdiction. Municipalities and the Tribal Nation reported their assessment information through the county, and whenever possible, completed a separate assessment for inclusion in the county information submitted. Homeland Security representatives appointed by municipalities were included in the county working groups.

## Description of Regions

Mississippi is subdivided into nine (9) Regional Response Regions. Each region has created a Regional Response Team (RRT) for all-hazards response, which includes CBRNE/WMD/T incidents. Statewide Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) covers the team activation, deployment and demobilization and each team operates in compliance with NIMS protocols. Each Team has a Team Leader, a Team Chief and a governing body acting as the fiscal agent. There is an Executive Council representing the RRTs that acts as an advisor to the SAA/State Homeland Security Director. Mississippi is a signatory of EMAC, and as a Gulf Coast state, it has traditionally received and provided support for hurricanes and other natural disasters from adjacent states. This support also is applicable in the event of a CBRNE/WMD/T incident. The program and capability review data highlights the need to enhance inter-state regional collaboration.

The Southeastern states have a bi-annual meeting of each of its state Homeland Security Directors which strengthens the information sharing and response capabilities within the southeastern region. This “consortium” enhances the collaboration between the states in the region with regard to planning, training and exercises.

## Evaluation

Evaluations of the progress made on stated objectives in the state of Mississippi’s Homeland Security Strategy (SHSS) will be made on an annual basis. In addition to the annual evaluation, regional meetings are held and conferences are organized as needed to discuss progress and to report on projects. Local Planning Councils were organized and meet to provide information on jurisdictional progress, issues and concerns along with strategy updates. The information from these meetings is provided to the State Office of Homeland Security for review by RRT leadership at their meetings. Information will be provided to the State Project Management Group for review at scheduled meetings conducted prior to the meeting of the State Homeland Security Council. The state group will have the responsibility of recommending revisions to the objectives and implementation steps in order to meet goals supported by the Mississippi SHSS. The state groups will also review progress made by state agencies and the state project management group will be chaired by the State Homeland Security Advisor or his/her designee. The council will monitor and follow up as necessary to ensure the completion of required corrective actions. The State Homeland Security Council is convened as needed by the State’s Homeland Security Advisor. The Governor is briefed regularly by the Homeland Security Advisor.

The State Homeland Security Advisor/SAA and the state Project Management Group will meet at the end of each fiscal year as an evaluation venue to examine the following:

1. Review the state's success in achieving the previous year's performance goals;
2. Evaluate plans for the upcoming year relative to the performance achieved in the previous year;
3. Discuss why specific goals were not met and which corrective actions may be required; and
4. Report on financial operations and status.